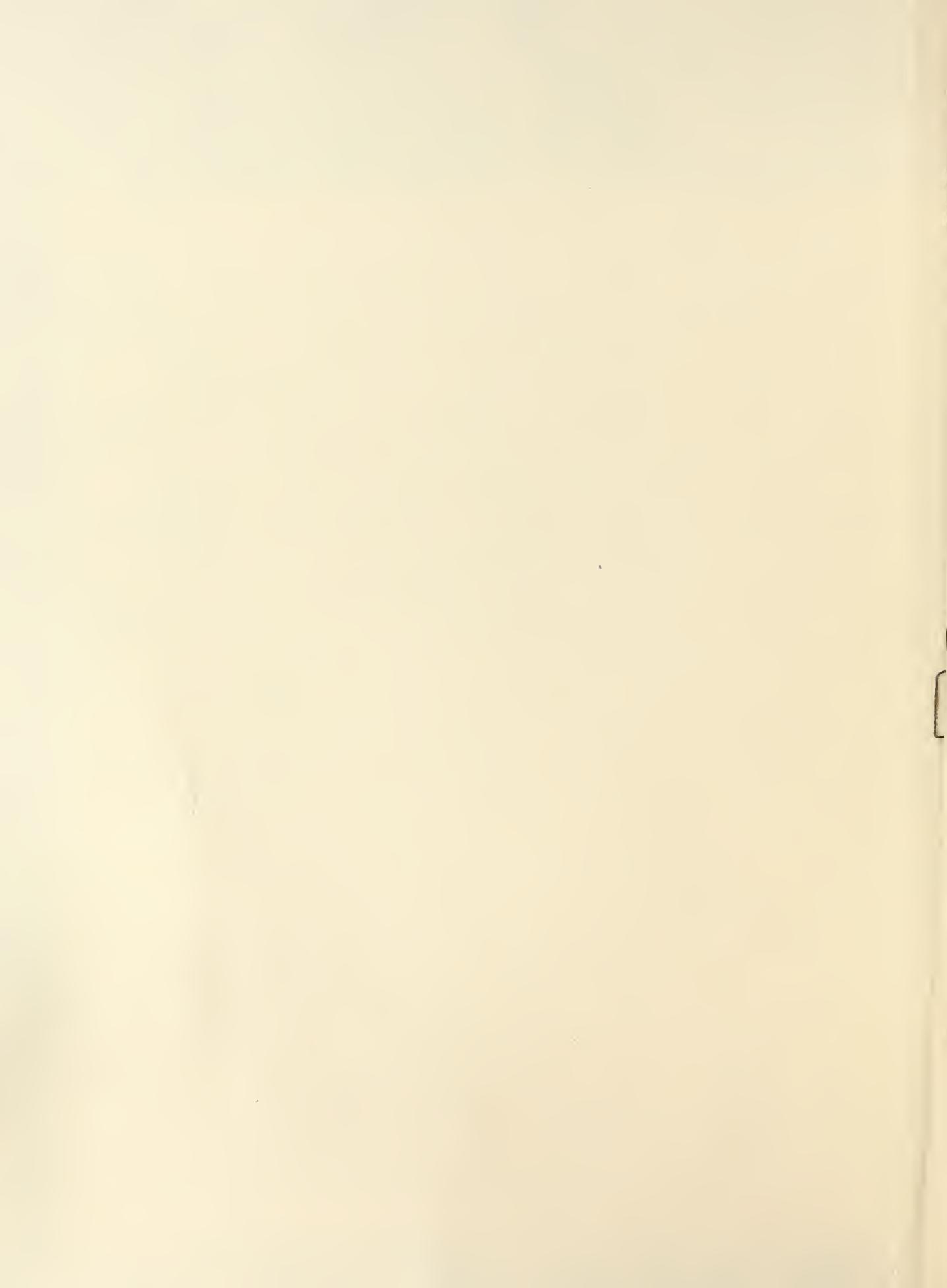


Historic, archived document

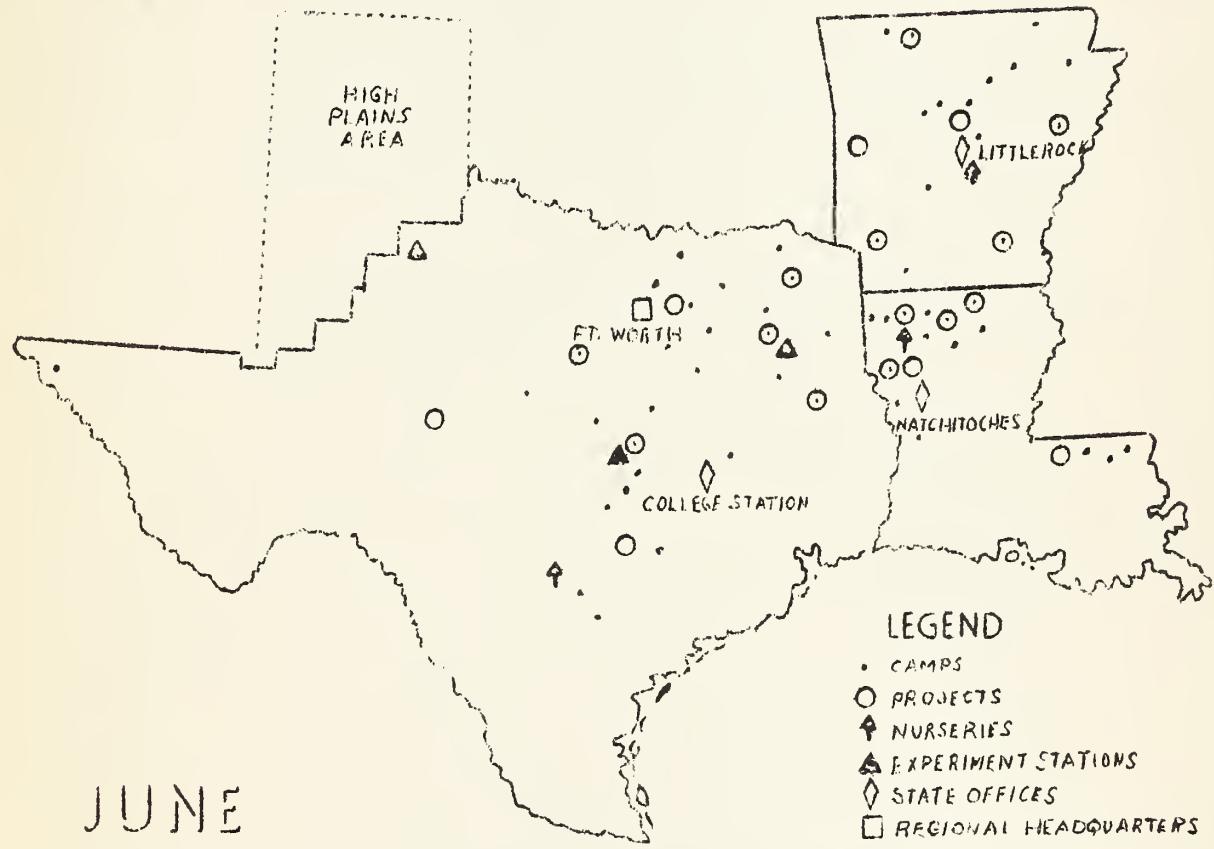
Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



SOIL
CONSERVATION SERVICE

NEW YORK

JUN 21



REGION 4
COMPRISING STATES OF LOUISIANA,
ARKANSAS, AND TEXAS EXCEPT
HIGH PLAINS AREA



DOES THE FARMER UNDERSTAND?

A first-rate means of disseminating soil and water conserving practices is a cooperator thoroughly convinced on his own program. He can intelligently explain soil conservation to an inquiring farmer only when he understands it in detail.

A thoroughly-sold cooperator, assuming that a complete program has been worked out on his farm, should be able to explain:

1. Effects of erosion on his own farm.
2. Kinds of erosion (sheet and gully).
3. Factors contributing to erosion, such as length and steepness of slopes, cover, cultural practices, soil types, organic content, agronomic practices.
4. Land use.
5. New terms, such as contours, strip farming, runoff, soil loss, topsoil, subsoil, parent material, land use, buffer strips, terraces, cover, weed trees.
6. Value of pasture management and treatment.
7. How to do timber stand improvement and tree planting.
8. Benefits of contour farming.
9. Benefits of strip cropping.
10. Benefits of waterways.
11. Benefits of terracing and how terraces are constructed.
12. Details of constructing certain kinds of check dams.
13. Why the Soil Conservation Service program is called a "complete, coordinated plan of erosion control."

CONDUCTING TOURS

The tour which affords inspection and discussion in the field of approved practices is recognized as one of the most effective educational methods. That a person will remember more of what he sees than what he hears is a well established educational principle. A great deal of time

is wasted in indoor discussion where too few of the participants have been on the ground to study the problems involved. The objective of the tour, then, is to afford an opportunity for both staff members and farmers to see the erosion control program applied in the field under various conditions, and an opportunity for discussion right on the ground.

Farm tours are made to inspect one or more phases of agriculture. In the Soil Conservation Service, regardless of what particular phase of agriculture the group may be chiefly interested in, it is essential that the complete farm conservation program be discussed. Only by so doing is it possible for the party to appreciate how any particular phase fits into the complete farm land use plan. This preliminary general discussion of the whole plan also prepares the farmer for a detailed discussion of particular phases.

If the following ideas are kept in mind, the tour will be well planned:

1. In selecting farms to visit, make sure that they afford an opportunity for study of representative problems of the area.
2. Visit only farms that offer a complete program of conservation operations.
3. Consider location of farms in order to expedite travel.
4. Don't try to visit too many farms. Study of one or two representative farms in a half day is better than a "joy ride" to a dozen farms in the same time.
5. Have available copies of maps, farm plans, graphs, and other pertinent data.
6. Plan the itinerary in detail. Go over the route, allotting appropriate time for travel, farm stops, lunch stops, and delays.
7. The cooperator is the key man. Let him and the conservationists who planned the farm do most of the talking about the plan in general. The technician should discuss any special problems relating to his field.
8. For all-day tours, let a successful farmer do the talking at lunch-hour meetings.
9. Make plans sufficiently in advance to allow for notifying all interested persons.
10. If necessary, arrange such details as hotel accommodation, meal stops, posting of highways and farms to be visited, and if advisable arrange for highway police convoy to avoid delays.

DO YOUR COOPERATORS KNOW THE VALUE OF
TREE CROPS?

When the price of cotton advances many farmers immediately think of putting more acreage into this crop. This extra acreage usually comes from clearing up a new ground. Often this new ground is located on slopes too steep for cultivation. Trees are the only crop suited for it as they hold the soil in place, prevent erosion and also produce a stable form of income for the farm.

An area of land covered with trees should be considered as an investment. It requires several years to grow timber to usable size and taxes are being paid on the land while the timber is growing. It is poor business to cut down and destroy such an investment just because the price of cotton or other annual crop has increased and more acreage is needed.

Slopes cleared for agricultural purposes require certain expenses before they are in good shape for permanent cultivation. They must be cleared of timber and terraced. It requires more than one or two good crops of cotton to pay for such expenses. The price of agricultural crops vary so much that it might not be profitable to farm such areas more than one or two years.

The price of timber has consistently increased for the past several years. The scarcity of good quality timber indicates that the price will continue to rise. Farm woodlands will probably produce a large percentage of high grade logs in the future. It should require careful consideration before destroying a crop of certain value and substituting one that fluctuates widely.

During periods of hard times many farmers turn to their woods to tide them over until better times. E. Bailey, a colored cooperator living near Heflin said, "I have lived off of my woods during several bad crop years. I don't know what I would have done if I had not had my timber to fall back on."

Many farm mortgages have been paid off with the proceeds from the sale of the timber on it.

Some landowners are beginning to realize the value of woods on a farm. They are having to buy fence posts, firewood and other wood materials needed. It is much cheaper to grow these materials than to buy them from the proceeds of other crops grown on the farm. When the cost of labor is considered in the production of a farm crop, it is apparent that a crop of trees is one of the cheapest to produce.

-- Project La-1,
Mindon, La.

ARE BLACK LOCUST PLANTATIONS BEING
CULTIVATED?

The cultivation of black locust trees is very essential to the life and rapid growth of the plants. Experiments show that newly planted black locust trees live better and will grow much faster if cultivated two or three times during the first year after they are planted. Therefore, it is urged that all cooperators having black locust plantings on their farms cultivate the young plants as soon as possible. Due to the trees being planted in rows prepared before planting, cultivation will be very easy.

These cultivations should be done before the grass and weeds are making much growth and before the weather gets hot and dry. There are several kinds of farm implements on the farm which can be used to cultivate the trees. A spring tooth harrow, cultivator, good size hoesweep, small turning plow all make a good tool for cultivating the trees. The cultivations should be shallow and the top soil well loosened. This will kill the grass and weeds and at the same time conserve moisture in the soil which is a very important factor in rapid growth of plants.

In some cases the locust plantings may have weeds and sprouts which cannot be killed with plowing alone. In cases of this kind a good strong hoe, brush hook, or an ax should be used to cut the sprouts and weeds before they get large enough to crowd or shade the young locust trees.

-- Project La-3,
Clinton, La.

PLANNING FOR WILD LIFE

Within the past few years, the country has become wild life conscious. People are beginning to realize the value of wild life, especially the birds. It is estimated by the Biological Survey that insect-eating birds protect agricultural crops to the extent of \$350,000,000 annually. The cotton boll weevil has at least sixty-six bird enemies and the cotton worm forty-one.

Crowley Ridge has at the present time an ample supply of wild life species to restock the area if they are given a minimum of protection. According to Mr. Homer Towns, Regional Biologist, the Forrest City Area has one of the best natural wild life sites in this part of the State.

There are many small patches, such as gullies, fence rows, and ditch banks which, with a little care, would become excellent wild life areas. At present there is enough summer food in the area to care for the wild life. In the winter, however, it is a different question. Any plantings done for wild life should be planned so as to care for this winter shortage of food.

Shrub lespedeza, wild plum, and sumac are a few of the good winter foods. Small patches of grain sorghum or similar plants left near good cover will do much toward increasing the wild life population.

During the nesting season, many nests are broken up by stray dogs or by the hunting dogs allowed to run loose. A rigid control of the dog population will do much to help wild life. Hunters kill many birds each year, but by controlling this hunting, there should be little damage done.

-- Ark-2,
Forrest City, Ark.

EXCELLENT BUR CLOVER SEED PLOT

An excellent seed plot is being obtained by W. L. Aswell, operator of the Floyd Edmiston farm, located a few miles north of Choudrant. On less than an acre of average hill land, Mr. Aswell has already harvested eighty bushels of bur clover seed and expects to harvest more than one hundred bushels from this small acreage. As he has been offered better than one dollar a bushel and his net expenditures were less than twenty-one dollars, he stands to clear around ninety dollars on this seed plot.

Instead of selling this seed, Mr. Aswell intends to save it for planting winter cover and green-manure crops next fall so as to protect his land from erosion during the winter rainy season and build up his land. He also intends to set aside five acres for a permanent bur clover seed plot the coming year.

-- Project La-1,
Ruston, La.

OUR JOB

"It is now a question whether human culture, which rests upon the use of the soil, can devise and enforce ways of dealing with the earth which will preserve this source of life so that it may support the men of the ages to come. If this cannot be done, we must look forward to the time-- remote it may be, yet clearly discernible-- when our kind, having wasted its great inheritance, will fade from the earth because of the ruin it has accomplished."

-- Ark-4,
Monticello, Arkansas.

SPREAD OF PRACTICES

Eight negroes, whose farms are outside the area of the Soil Conservation camp at Calhoun, Louisiana, are putting into practice on their farms complete soil conservation programs, as planned by their local Agent A. G. Facon.

Their information has come largely from the Calhoun Camp. A five day educational program in soil conservation and farm management was held at Calhoun, Louisiana, for negro County Agent, during the week November 9th to 13th, 1936. Besides the training received by their County Agent, most of these negroes have personally visited the Calhoun Camp area and made a tour of the work.

According to a statement made by local Agent Facon, these eight farmers have terraced more than 77 acres under the technical supervision and advice of the Camp personnel, in addition to using all other phases of the coordinated erosion control program.

** -- Project La-5,
Farmerville, La.

BUR CLOVER PROVES PROFITABLE

Ninety bushels of bur clover seed have just been harvested from approximately one-third acre of land on the farm of S. D. Kennedy, located on the Marion Highway a few miles from Farmerville, Louisiana.

This crop was planted last fall after the regular crop was harvested and therefore the use of the land was not lost for cotton or corn.

** Project La-5,
Farmerville, La.

COOPERATORS IN BROWNEWOOD CAMP AREA SEEDING
DEPRESSIONS

Farmers, cooperating with the Soil Conservation Service in the Brownwood camp area are plowing in and seeding gullies between terraces and strip crops this week.

Where land is terraced or strip cropped across existing small gullies, such depressions are still water concentration points between the terraces or strip crops. These gullies should then be plowed in or back furrowed,

and seeded to cane, sudan or some other close-growing, fibrous-rooted plant. This practice slows down the flow of water in the depression, causes it to silt in, and aids materially in making terraces and strip crops more effective. If continued, it will eliminate these points of water concentration, permitting the planting of crops the full length of the row-crop interval. The smoothing and leveling effect of this practice will pay for itself many times over by making future tillage operations easier.

-- Project Tex-8,
Dublin, Texas.

A FEW SEASONAL JOBS FOR
COOPERATORS

1. Mow pasture areas. "Mowing weeds regularly triples grass production." From a statement made by Mr. Johnson, Supt. of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station at Tyler, Texas.
2. Cut weeds in outlet channels, meadow strips and permanent strips, such as alfalfa and clover to prevent reseeding and moisture competition.
3. Plant enough temporary pasture to keep stock from damaging permanent pasture sod during the dry summer months.
4. Construct summer terraces on small grain stubble land and other available areas.
5. Disc bermuda sod after rainy periods.
6. Complete and repair contour ridges and clean pastures of brush, prickly pear and stumps for mowing.

-- Project Tex-8,
Dublin, Texas.

SELLING OUR PROGRAM

It is essential that the cooperator appreciate certain fundamentals if he is to understand soil conservation and discuss it soundly with his neighbors. With this in mind, some random suggestions may be helpful to those who work with farmers:

1. Have as much previous knowledge of the farmer as is possible and attempt to determine his special interests and establish a common ground.
2. Lead the farmer to talk about himself and his special interests. If you permit the farmer to do most of the talking, he may give you most of your arguments.
3. Talk in the farmer's language and in terms he can understand. When a new term is used, be sure he understands exactly what it means. Do not assume too much previous knowledge on his part. Be sure he knows what you are talking about.
4. Sell the program out on the field so the farmer can see what is being discussed. In showing a farmer signs of erosion on his farm, try not to antagonize him.
5. Consistently take the attitude that you know he is interested.
6. Hold your suggestions, if possible, until the entire farm has been covered.
7. Do not promise any work subject to the approval of others.
8. Be sure the cooperator is sold on soil conservation and not merely on the labor or material furnished by the government.
9. Explain only pertinent practices. Do not cover too many subjects. It is better to omit the explanation of some practices in early contacts than to explain them all and not have the farmer understand any of them.
10. Be slow to suggest any changes radically different from the general practices in the community, particularly along agronomic lines.
11. Do not scare the farmer into believing that his farm is going to rack and ruin.
12. Give the farmer something to think about and leave him in a thinking mood.
13. Leave the farmer in a friendly attitude so that you can return in a month or a year and be welcome.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
REGION 4

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CONSERVATOR
Neil P. Anderson Building
Ft. Worth, Texas

Official Business

PENALTY FOR
PRIVATE USE TO AVOID
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE
\$300.00

Library Agricultural Economics
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D. C.